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## THE PEOPLING OF ASIA.

(PLATE VIII.)

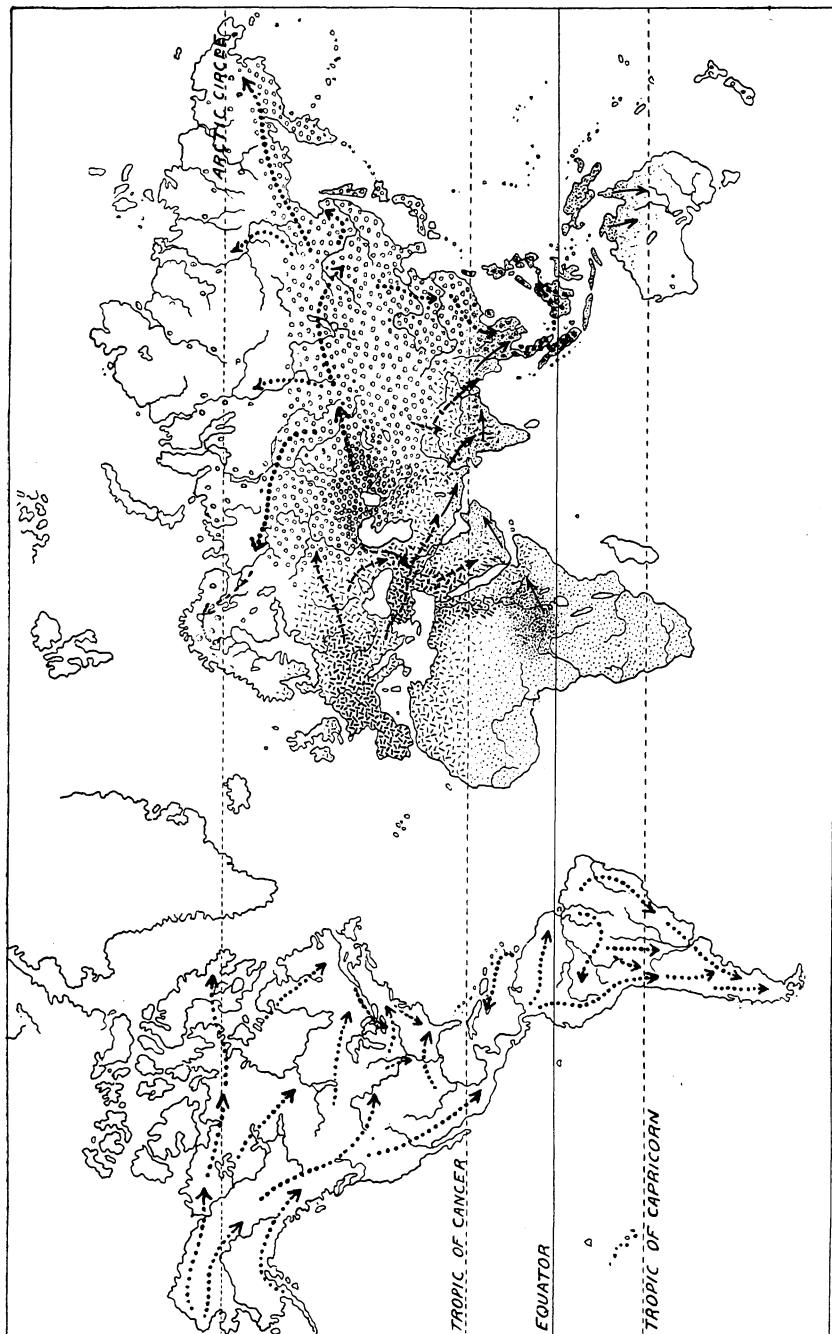
By ALEŠ HRDLIČKA.

(*Read April 21, 1921.*)

The peopling of Asia, as may well be appreciated on reflection, constitutes one of the greatest problems of anthropology. The solution of this problem could not have been approached with any great hope of success until lately, for it involves in no small degree the peopling of the whole world. Even now many of the details are lacking or obscure; but through collateral as well as direct research sufficient light, it seems, has by this time been obtained for the possibility of our attempting, with due reservations, of some general deductions.

It is quite certain that these deductions are bound to receive substantial modifications as anthropological knowledge of the Asiatic countries and especially that of early man accumulates; they can for the present be little more than working hypotheses; nevertheless, what will be here outlined is supported by many facts of considerable weight.

Looking at the subject of the peopling of Asia with due perspective, we may readily come to the first definite conclusion, which is that the vast continent could not have been peopled either from the north or the east; and that consequently it could only have been peopled from the south, southwest or west. From this it logically follows that the eastern, central, northern and northeastern Asiatic populations must have been ethnic extensions from other parts of the continent. And as all these populations possess certain characteristics in common which enable science to classify them as "mongoloid," it is further plain that they could not have come from more than one direction or from more than one ancestral land or source.



These mongoloid populations comprise collectively considerably more than one half of the total population of the Asiatic continent, and if we can trace their derivation we shall have solved a very important part of the problem of the peopling of Asia.

The first question that obtrudes itself on this attempt is whether or not these mongoloid peoples were really the first inhabitants of the countries which they occupy today. To this it may be answered that there is no valid evidence whatsoever to the contrary. The various branches of the mongoloids are, it may be safe to assume, not of equal antiquity; there are older and younger branches of the stock; but outside of some marginal or recent mixtures none of these peoples show any evidence of having fused with any geologically more ancient or racially different man in the regions which they hold as their own. Added to this we have the corroborative evidence of a total lack so far of substantiated remains of early man in these territories. It is true that relatively small parts of Asia have as yet been thoroughly explored; but the archeological and related explorations by the Russians, Japanese and others represent already a large amount of labor with completely negative results so far as the presence of early man is concerned in the lands occupied by the mongoloid people. A few isolated supposedly "paleolithic" implements and a problematical piece of a sacrum, believed to be ancient by a few of the Japanese, are insufficient to sway the balance. The natives, particularly in China, have long been in the habit of collecting and selling everything in the way of old and odd objects, including stone implements, and examples of the latter may not seldom be found—at times nicely mounted—in the markets of the Chinese cities; but they have never brought, so far as could be learned by interested foreigners, any implements or objects that could be identified as geologically ancient or pre-mongoloid, nor have any other indications of pre-neolithic sites been anywhere discovered in these countries. There is, therefore, to this day no evidence of any earlier man in all this vast mongoloid region, which comprises over four fifths of Asia, or the whole territory to the east of the Urals and the Caspian and to the north of the Himalayas, besides the great islands.

Where did these mongoloid peoples come from to their present

homes? Their traditions, such as they are, lean generally to the west or northwest. Nothing points to a possibility that they might have come across the great mountain ranges from the south; and they did not come along the coast or by the sea from the southeast, for the Malayan people of these territories, though mongoloid, are according to all indications only extensions of the stock into these regions from farther north. Everything points to the probability of the invasion having proceeded from the north southward. We have a very valid evidence for this in the presence in these regions of the scattered Negrito. The Negrito is a weak race physically as well as mentally. In both respects he is decidedly inferior to the Malay. His wide scattering over the islands of southeastern Asia with traces of his presence over a considerable part of the southern stretches of the mainland, indicates plainly that the Negrito must at one time have occupied these regions unopposed, for he could not possibly have prevailed over and penetrated though any stronger people. It was only subsequently that he was partly annihilated, partly mixed with the yellow-brown Malays and partly scattered by them into the mountains and least desirable places, as they advanced into his territory from the north. And this must have been about the same time that the streams of the ancestors of the present Hindu population reached and settled in India, breaking up the Negrito in that sphere and preventing the Malay from extending also into that territory. In Hither India, in Persia and in Asia Minor there are no traces of any mongoloid population except such as can be accounted for by border extensions or through historic introductions.

We have therefore nothing substantial on which to base a possible origin of the mongoloid peoples in the southern or southwestern parts of Asia.

The mongoloid peoples, we have now seen, cannot be regarded as having evolved in their present abodes—for notwithstanding certain speculations there is not a trace of any evidence and very little probability that there has ever been anything in the central or northwestern parts of the continent from which man could evolve; and there are no indications that man has lived in these vast regions except in the relatively recent post-glacial period.

The mongoloid people, it is quite plain, did not originate where

they are. They could not possibly have come from the east or from the north, and we have just seen that there is no likelihood of their coming from the south. This leaves but one broad avenue of approach which is that from the west through the great flat lands to the north of the Himalayan and central Asiatic mountains. And this connects the ancestors of the mongoloid peoples inevitably with the prehistoric westernmost Asiatic and through these with the old European peoples; while chronologically they can only connect, judging from the evidence of their main physical traits, with the late Paleolithic and the succeeding periods.

So much for the present for the mongoloids; and with these out of the way there remains to be considered only the peopling of southern and western Asia.

This part of the problem is again plainly divisible into that relating to the presence of the Negrito, and that of the Mediterranean, Semitic, Aryan and mixed populations.

According to all indications the Negrito was the first human inhabitant in any numbers of a large proportion of—if not of the entire—southern and southeastern coasts of Asia and of the neighboring as well as some more distant islands, reaching to New Guinea and possibly even to parts of Australia. Whence he came, how he came so far, and how he succeeded in occupying such extensive regions, including what now are far separated islands, are largely questions for future determination; but the facts show that all this has been accomplished.

It now seems most probable that the Negrito is racially connected with the Central African small black man; and that he extended over the great territory he once covered mainly over land, and that either over Arabia and by scouring the sea coast, or over land extensions and connections which may have since disappeared. Still he may have become enough of a navigator to reach at least some of the islands where he left his traces over the seas—the blacks of Micro- and Melanesia who have considerable Negrito blood have shown themselves to be quite capable of that. That the Negrito did not originate separately from the African blacks is amply evident from the many characteristic resemblances he bears to the latter; and that he did not originate in Asia and then cross

to Africa we may decide on one hand from his parentage to the Negro and on the other from the improbability of his succeeding in penetrating, weak as he was, from elsewhere into the heart of the African continent.

In his extension eastward and southward the Negrito may or may not have met with other human beings. He may possibly have met with some representatives of what is now commonly referred to as the "Australoid" type of man. Certain it is that he met with no large numbers, for these would have effectually checked his extension. Also, wherever better preserved, the Negrito shows still a pure type, without any signs of ancient admixture with such heterogeneous population. It seems most likely therefore that the territories over which the Negrito succeeded in extending were devoid at that time of other population. This enabled the small, poorly equipped black man, advancing always in the direction of better prospects and least resistance, to cover in time the enormous area over which we find his remnants to this day. Just when this happened and how long it took, can scarcely be conjectured; but it was not very long, speaking in the geological or evolutionary sense, for the Negrito is not a geologically ancient type, besides which he has modified but little in his own way since his separation from the mother stock of blacks.

These deductions concerning the Negrito incidentally raise one great question, which is that about the place of man's origin. It has so far generally been believed that the cradle of mankind lay somewhere in southeastern Asia or what are now the adjoining archipelagos, for it is these regions in which live to this day two of the anthropoid apes, in which existed once, as shown by the Sivalik finds, still other anthropoid forms, and which gave us the remains of the *Pithecanthropus*, a being that so closely approaches to the ideal "missing link," half-ape, or half-man. These facts, together with the existence of apparently favorable environment for further evolution in the direction of man in the regions under consideration, have produced a powerful predilection in scientific minds in favor of these regions as the site of man's evolution. Nor is anyone in a position to-day to gainsay the possibility that the early phases of human evolution have taken place in what is now Malaysia

and southeastern Asia. The existence there of the *Pithecanthropus* is undeniable evidence that whatever may have happened subsequently or elsewhere, far-reaching steps in the direction of man once were taking place in these parts of the world and reached to at least half of the way.

But after *Pithecanthropus* there is a great void, and the next beings in the line of man's ascent are found far off, in western and southwestern Europe. The Heidelberg Man, judging from the great massive jaw, was still an exceedingly primitive human being—perhaps hardly yet deserving the term human; yet he lived already in western Europe or over 7,000 miles away from Java, the home of the *Pithecanthropus*. It is true that according to our calculations there must have elapsed between the period in which lived the *Pithecanthropus* and that in which lived the Man of Heidelberg at least 150,000 years and possibly a good deal over; but the task remains of bringing such primitive beings over such a distance and in that particular direction. Still such a feat cannot be said to have been impossible. There is no lack of examples of a similarly great and even greater spread of various animals. It is essentially a question of numbers, food and time. But why the direction?

It would seem that under conditions propitious enough to evolve man in southeastern or southern Asia he would have found these regions suitable for considerable local multiplication, and for the peopling of the whole of southern Asia if not the entire continent. But so far there is a complete lack of evidence of any such multiplication, and there is a substantial certainty that early man was not able to people the rest of Asia.

It is plain that there is a great gap in our knowledge at this very important stage in man's history, over which we are still obliged to pass by mere speculation. Such speculation involves in the main two alternatives. The first is that man originated in southeastern Asia; that for some reason—doubtless environmental—he was prevented from spreading northward; but that he spread relatively rapidly westward, until he reached the western limits of the then habitable parts of Europe. His route may have led over the then connected Asia Minor and the Balkans, or along the

southern shores of the Mediterranean; and from causes unknown he appears never to have acquired a lasting foothold or any numerical importance in the regions from which he came or which he traversed. The last proposition, if correct, would be nothing to wonder at, for we have good evidence of the fact that until towards the end of the glacial times man had not been able to reach any numerical importance even in Europe.

The second hypothesis would be that the successful line of man's ancestry originated not in Asia but in Africa, where we also know of fossil anthropoids and where there live to this day the two anthropoid apes nearest to man, namely the chimpanzee and the gorilla. Unless man's origin should be regarded as a pure accident, which seems unjustifiable, it may well be assumed that conditions such as favored the differentiation from anthropoids towards man in one locality existed also in other regions. The assumption of man's origin in Africa would imply the conclusion that the progeny of the *Pithecanthropus* had not reached the stage of man and has become extinct near to where it developed; while the man originating in Africa could, over the land connections at Gibraltar and elsewhere, much more readily have reached southwestern Europe, which is the site and cradle of the main stages of his further development.

Some difficulty in these connections seems to be presented by the Australians, and the "australoid" type wherever met with in the seas off southeastern Asia. Due to the occasional presence in this type of certain primitive physical features such as the protruding brows and jaws, the type as a whole has come to be looked upon as something very primitive and very ancient. Some of the earlier anthropologists would doubtless have found little difficulty in accepting the notion that the "australoid" man may be a local descendant of the early man of southeastern Asia. But to this there are valid objections. The "australoid" man is not a uniform type; he is admixed more or less according to localities with the Negrito, and possibly even with some of the Indo-Europeans. When we discount these admixtures, there is left what in no wise could be regarded as a separate species or even a distinct variety of man, but a man in all essentials like the western man of say ten to twenty

thousands of years ago. He represents a type such as must have been common in Europe and the rest of the inhabited parts of the Old World from the Aurignacian to the earlier Neolithic times. That such similarities could have developed independently in two environmentally so widely different regions as man's western habitat of that time and the tropical and semi-tropical seas and lands off southeastern Asia is, to say the least, very improbable. But the only alternative is that the "australoid" man is the same as the later prehistoric western man, that he is derived from the same body, and that he has reached Australia and wherever else he may have existed in relatively late times by extension or migration. He may well represent a strain of fairly late man of southwestern Asia or northern Africa, which had penetrated into Malaysia and Australia before or perhaps through the Negrito.

In addition to the "mongoloid" and "australoid" populations of Asia and the south seas, there are to be considered the actual peoples of southern and western Asia including Asia Minor and the Arabic peninsula.

These seemingly so complex populations may in reality be readily classified and accounted for. They are essentially recent and mixed populations. The elements entering into their composition in the order of their importance are: the Mediterranean, the "Semitic," the "Aryan," the Negrito and the Yellow-Brown; to which in the north are added the transitional (white-mongoloid) Tatars and Turkmen. Among the Semites, both actual (Beduins) and the old (Palestine, etc.), there is also some admixture through Egypt and Ethiopia of the Sudanese and East African Negro. In Galatia, Phrygia and some other localities of Asia Minor and in the sub-Caspian regions finally, there are small groups of people of direct connections with or derivation from known peoples of Europe.

According to growing evidence the southwestern and western-most portions of Asia have been peopled by extensions from Europe and possibly Africa during the later Paleolithic and Neolithic periods; and they doubtless have received wave after wave of extension or invasion of prehistoric and early historic peoples from over the Balkan Peninsula, the Caucasus and from the Caspian-Aral-Turkestan regions. These peoples annihilated, admixed with

or drove to least desirable spots whatever there may have been of the Negrito and of the "australoids," except in Australia; in the east they impinged upon the yellow-brown man coming from the north and stopped him, mixed with him along the lines of interpenetration, and admixed with him invaded and peopled parts of the Philippines, part of Micronesia, and the Polynesia.

Resuming now the subject of the peopling of Asia, it may be briefly outlined as follows:

The question of man's origin in southeastern Asia or the adjoining lands is still doubtful; man may possibly have originated in some more western portion of the northern or semi-tropical belt.

No trace of man corresponding in type and antiquity to the Heidelberg or the Neanderthal Man of Europe has as yet been discovered in any part of Asia, and it may be regarded as more than doubtful whether these early forms could have reached these regions. Judging from some archaeological facts and from the presence of the "australoid" type in the south seas, it seems probable that western man reached these regions at a period corresponding to the later Paleolithic epoch from Europe, westernmost Asia or northern Africa.

All that part of the continent of Asia north of the Himalayas was unpeopled until, say, twenty to fifteen thousand years ago. An extension northward of any possible earlier man from the south would have been prevented partly by the mountains and partly by a semi-desert condition of the great loess areas of China.<sup>1</sup>

The earliest people of whom there is any evidence who reached and peopled the southern coasts and as yet undetermined parts of the Asiatic mainland and what are now the off-lying islands, were the Negrito of probably African derivation.

Not long before or after the Negrito there was an extension into the South Seas of the "australoid" strain of western population. The rest of the population of southern Asia is the result of wave upon wave of extension and invasion from the west, northwest and the northern inland regions, with subsequent admixtures.

<sup>1</sup> That such a condition of these vast regions did exist during the earlier part of the Quaternary, is attested by the results of paleontological and geological researches of Dr. J. G. Anderson, of the Geological Survey of China.

About the same time or but shortly after the Negrito reached southern Asia there was taking place a larger movement of yellow-brown population from the more westward drying up regions into eastern Asia and over southern Siberia. This population gradually spread over the whole Asiatic continent north of the Himalayas and, multiplying, began to extend in all directions—through the Negrito area to the south and southeastward, peopling the southeastern parts of the continent with Malaysia; it peopled the Nippon Archipelago; and as food was diminishing or pressure behind became greater, it extended along the coast northward to the northeastern limits of the continent, whence it passed on gradually and repeatedly, over the various practicable routes, still further eastward, reaching and eventually peopling America. Still later the surplus of this brown population in the south, admixed already to some extent with the Negrito as well as with a more important contingent of the more recent near-white-man types from the west, peopled Micronesia and Polynesia. Meanwhile the older and darker yellow-brown wave was, according to all indications, followed by successively lighter, though still yellow-brown waves of people from the west, which, penetrating among and mixing with the old population, gave us such actual ethnic units as the Chinese, Japanese, Koreans and Tatars. Remnants of the oldest brown wave are still discernible in the living population in many parts of this vast region, particularly in Mongolia, Thibet, the Saghalien and the Formosa Island, as well as in parts of Siberia.

All these yellow-brown people could have had but one far-back parentage—that of the early Neolithic western Asiatics, and with these that of the Paleolithic Europeans. They unquestionably must proceed from the same source as the white race, but they separated from the mother stock before or during the earlier parts of the period of its differentiation into the white Europeans.

A word at the conclusion about the origin of the Negrito and Negro. They too, upon a critical examination, present ample evidence of original identity with the old Mediterranean and European stock. They are no separate species, and the main physical differences between them and the rest of mankind are but skin deep. Their forebears must have separated from the general parent

stock at a distant and yet not excessively distant period—not earlier in all probability and rather later than the second half, the latter Neanderthal part, of the Paleolithic period; and passing deeper into Africa they eventually became modified through environmental influences into the smaller and the taller Negro.

The cradle of humanity therefore, according to present indications, was essentially southwestern Europe, with later on the Mediterranean Basin, western Asia, and Africa. It is primarily from Europe and secondarily from these regions that the earth was peopled. And its peopling, so far as can now be determined, appears on the whole to be a matter of comparative recency.

That earlier man was not able to people the globe before was in all probability due to his insufficient effectiveness. Up towards near the end of the glacial times and his old stone culture, he had evidently all he could do to preserve mere existence. Only after he advanced mentally and in culture so far that he could control his environment sufficiently to secure a steady surplus of births over deaths was he able, and in fact became obliged, to extend over other parts of the earth.

The cause of man's peopling the world, it may well be assumed, was not a mere wish to do so, but chiefly necessity arising from growing numbers and correspondingly diminishing supply of food. It was this in the main which led him to spread; it was this which eventually led him to agriculture. And his spread—for it was a spread rather than "migrations"—followed the three great laws of spread of all organized beings which are: (1) movement in the direction of least resistance; (2) movement in the direction of the greatest prospects; and (3) movement due to a force from behind, to compulsion.

The peopling of Asia is a key to the problem of the peopling of all that part of the world lying east and southeast of that continent, in particular of the Americas; and even our imperfect knowledge of the events shows how vain it would be to expect to find in this latter part of the world traces of man of any great antiquity.